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CIA Chief Pictures Kremlin Dilemma

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If you think the West has troubles, give a thought to the dangers Moscow faces.

In substance, that is the theme Allen W. Dulles, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, is pushing as he tries to reassure administration leaders, the press, and the general public on events in the Middle East and Central Europe.

Interestingly enough, the country's top intelligence officer, brother of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, finds an ally in his analysis of Soviet troubles in Communist President Tito of Yugoslavia. President Tito says the Kremlin made a "fatal error" in using Soviet troops against Hungarians.

The Soviets have had to reimpose Stalinism because they have discovered that "an 80 per cent dictatorship" won't work, Mr. Dulles says. They reversed their brief policy of tolerance when they discovered that "half liberties, qualified freedom" do not satisfy.

Youth Rises Up

"The gravest danger which a Communist dictatorship faces today," asserts Mr. Dulles, is "the uprising of youth against tyranny." It was the youth in Poland, the youth in Hungary —supposed to have been thoroughly indoctrinated with Marxism, Leninism, and Stalinism for a decade—that defected.

It was the youth of Eastern Europe that chose unknown freedom for known tyranny. It was the youth of the so-called satellite countries that risked their lives and sacrificed them in order to achieve a freedom they had never enjoyed.

To Mr. Dulles, at least (and he undoubtedly represents basic White House thinking on this point—or, it could be, the White House reflects Mr. Dulles thinking), the Kremlin is fighting a losing battle. It cannot block all the avenues through which truth permeates to the farthest corners of the globe.

It cannot completely isolate its people from the news of Soviet brutality in Hungary, much as it tries. It cannot educate the Soviet people in the field of natural science and industry, as it must to keep up with the West, without arousing their critical faculties. It cannot ease its dictatorship and have it too. It cannot eat its cake and have it.

The "great gamble," the losing gamble, that the Kremlin is taking, according to Mr. Dulles, is to believe it can repudiate Stalinism and its unpopular characteristics without relinquishing the monopoly of power that is Stalinism.

The basic question that the Kremlin faces is whether a partial dictatorship is possible—not a benevolent dictatorship, but a partial dictatorship. Benevolent dictators do not relinquish, they only relax, their powers. When the Kremlin turned partial dictator and agreed to permit even qualified freedom in Hungary, it was frightened by the results and apparently has abruptly reversed itself.

This reversal is what Marshal Tito denounces. But this reversal is what Mr. Dulles implies is inevitable in a dictatorship in a modern age if it is to keep control of its empire and peoples. When Hungary put the Kremlin dictatorship to the test, the Kremlin saw its control of the whole Soviet domain collapsing—not today, but tomorrow.

The Soviets were frightened by the consequences of Stalin's policy at home and abroad, Mr. Dulles avers, and they now are even more frightened by the emerging consequences of their de-Stalinization policy. Mr. Dulles appears to believe that the days of ruthless Stalinism may be back again—not because the Kremlin felt that de-Stalinization was not succeeding, but because it sees it "succeeding" beyond any limits it would permit.

This analysis, this interpretation, of Kremlin troubles is admittedly long range and general. It does not face up to Soviet penetration of the Middle East; it does not involve itself in the paramount German issue. But it does point up the basic trouble, the central dilemma that the Kremlin faces: Is a partial dictatorship possible?